

# **Peace News**

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LOOK**



**TAKE  
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NEWS**

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*photo by Caroline Austin*

As nationalism replaced class struggle as the basis of political discourse in Serbia, the obsession with reproduction was transferred to the nation. With the 1987 "anti-bureaucratic revolution" (led by Slobodan Milosevic) a strange sort of sisterhood began to show itself on the streets. Huge crowds throughout the country shouted "we want arms" — in a sort of collective trance, united in hate and the desire for vengeance for Serbia's "offended nationhood". In tandem with the cult of blood and soil, the new Serbian nationalists also summoned to life the symbolic figure of mother Yugovich — the long-suffering, brave, stoic mother of nine, offering her children up to death in the defence of the fatherland. Maternity is now to be seen as an obligation, not as a free option for women."

Belgrade feminist Stasa Zajovic commenting on ideology, power and nationalist mythology in former-Yugoslavia.

Eighty percent of the Honduran economy is in the hands of overseas investors, and half of the annual budget is spent on foreign debt payments and defence. Groups like the one I visited in Choluteca clearly view the economic stranglehold of the multinationals as a war against the poor. The street children are casualties of that war. By caring for the street children, they believe they are extending 'the hand of friendship' and providing practical help. They look to these children as their future."

Juley Howard on liberation theology action in Honduras.

There was a steady movement of people coming and going. At times the rally swelled to 6-7000 at night. The continuous presence of young and old express a hope that there may soon be a change in Serbia. They also say that those who refused to fight in this war are not guilty of any crime, and should not be prosecuted."

Eric Bachman on demonstrations against the Milosevic government in Belgrade.

Moscow deputies stated that they would stop them from collecting signatures. Some theatres, however, allowed them to take signatures during intermissions; along with street collections and other initiatives, the group managed to accumulate 50,000 signatures throughout the Union. Memorial groups were founded in most republics, and the momentum began to roll Memorial's way. Memorial has maintained a leadership group of 24 people. When I asked how they arrived at that figure, they said it was the maximum number that could fit in any of their flats!"

Yeshua Moser on the Moscow-based, pan-republic human rights group Memorial.

Men, of course, are sometimes raped by police or security personnel; but this is less common, while sexual abuse of women is an almost routine form of attack. Perhaps this is because it pulls a number of power imbalances neatly together — the "state" versus the "dissident", the powerful man versus the weak woman, the jailer versus the prisoner, the "sexual object" versus the "sexual actor". Raping men is a powerful tool of humiliation, but it is not so symbolically tidy; and it implies that the jailer, too, can potentially be emasculated in the same way as his victim. To rape a man is to tell him he is no longer really a man. To rape a woman is to tell her precisely that she is a woman."

Maggie Helwig, editor of *The ACTivist*, Toronto, on the publication of the Amnesty report, "Rape and Sexual Abuse: Torture and Ill-treatment of Women in Detention".

The *intifada* was essentially designed to disengage, to pull the plugs on all the points where Palestinian life was dependent on Israel. Yet one of its essential requirements — and indeed one of its successes — has been its impact on the Israeli public. Rigby explains that, as fear is the dominant emotion in Israeli society, the only means for true and lasting peace must involve confronting and transforming this fear. Reconciliation must thus engage Israelis and reassure them that their ultimate security lies in the collective and individual rights of Palestinians."

Deena Hurwitz, editor of "Walking the Red Line: Israelis in search of justice for Palestine", reviewing Andrew Rigby's book "Living the Intifada".

The Ma'asiyahu Prison, where Abie Nathan is held, is on all sides surrounded by land belonging to the Israeli Prisons Authority. Therefore, solidarity demonstrations such as took place weekly two years ago under the window of Nathan's cell at Eyal Prison have virtually been made impossible. On the evening of 7 December, however, the prison guards were taken by surprise by a large group of activists from Yesh Gvul. Under cover of darkness, the activists approached the perimeter fence near Nathan's cell and shouted "Three cheers for Abie Nathan!" The prison guards who arrived at the scene could only gape as the activists sang peace songs for a quarter of an hour, and departed."

Adam Keller on the jailing of (subsequently freed) Israeli peace activist Abie Nathan.

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